

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Harrisburg

A GUIDE TO SCHOOL REORGANIZATION
IN PENNSYLVANIA

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FOREWORD

The need for reorganizing the administrative structure of our public school system in Pennsylvania has long been recognized and is becoming increasingly evident as current demands for expanding school services emphasize inherent weaknesses. The impact of social and economic changes following the war has increased the pressure for reorganizations of school districts into larger units of administration.

This need has been brought into sharp focus by the passage of Act 361 which requires reorganization plans to be prepared by county boards of school directors, approved by the State Council of Education and submitted to the electorate for final decision. This Act has laid the foundation for a democratic method of approaching the important problem of school district reorganizations.

The cardinal principle governing all studies and deliberations should be the welfare of the children. The plans adopted and approved will shape the educational destiny of the children of Pennsylvania for many years to come and, therefore, they should be prepared and executed with the greatest of care. The paramount consideration in formulating plans for the reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas should be the kind of educational program needed and the type of administrative unit best suited to provide that program.

While this manual has been prepared to serve as a guide to school officials and lay groups interested in the important task of reorganizing the administrative structure of the public school system in Pennsylvania, it should be considered as a preliminary bulletin, subject to revision and improvement from time to time. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Advisory Committee and others who have participated in its preparation.

Francis B. Haas
Superintendent of Public Instruction

CONTENTS

- I. PENNSYLVANIA'S EDUCATIONAL CHARTER
- II. THE NEED FOR REORGANIZATION
- III. OBJECTIVES OF REORGANIZATION
- IV. ADVANTAGES OF REORGANIZATION
- V. DUTIES OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION
- VI. DUTIES OF COUNTY BOARDS OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
- VII. GUIDEPOSTS TO BETTER SCHOOL ORGANIZATION
- VIII. SUGGESTED PROCEDURES
- IX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



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PENNSYLVANIA'S EDUCATIONAL CHARTER

For every child in Pennsylvania protection of his constitutional right to an education.

For every child an understanding, competent teacher.

For every child an adaptable educational program--instruction and practice in how to become a competent citizen--training and guidance to do some part of the world's work well--activities for the development of worthy home membership, wise use of leisure time, health, culture, and character.

For every child a school term sufficient in length to enable him to profit to the full extent of his capacities from opportunities offered by education.

For every child safe, sanitary, hygienic, and properly equipped school buildings and grounds.

For every citizen of the Commonwealth provision for a continuing education--to make up for opportunities lost in earlier years and to provide means whereby the individual may adjust himself to new civic, social, and economic responsibilities.

THE NEED FOR REORGANIZATION

For the past quarter of a century or more, educators in Pennsylvania and interested laymen have been discussing the need for a reorganization of the administrative structure of our public school system on a more efficient basis. Numerous commissions and committees have been appointed to study the problem and, almost without exception, their reports have recommended larger units of administration and larger attendance areas.

While considerable progress has been made in the formation of larger attendance areas by the consolidation of small schools, both elementary and secondary, only slight improvement can be noted in our administrative machinery. Despite all legislative attempts and the earnest efforts of many school administrators to effect school district reorganization along more efficient lines, few improvements in basic school district organization have been made. We still have hundreds of small, poorly organized, inefficient and wholly unnecessary school districts which are finding it increasingly difficult to discharge their functions with justice to either pupils or taxpayers.

The small size of many of our local school districts results in a concentration of wealth in some and the exclusion of sufficient taxable wealth in others. Some districts escape all but a very small share of the cost of education while other districts are unable to provide essential school services and facilities by taxing themselves to the limit allowed by law. This situation retards the realization of equality of educational opportunities.

The need for reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas is brought into sharp focus at this particular time because of the following factors:

1. Recent legislation has made the operation of small schools excessively expensive to local school districts because of a change in the method of State support.
2. Small school districts are finding it increasingly difficult to provide essential administrative and supervisory services under this new method of State support.
3. Districts maintaining small schools find it extremely difficult if not impossible to secure and retain well-trained teachers at a salary which they can afford to pay.
4. Many small districts are unable to provide adequate school plant facilities because of limited financial ability.
5. The General Assembly has enjoined county boards of school directors to prepare and submit to the State Council of Education on or before July, 1948 a plan for the reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas within the county.
6. The State Council of Education has been directed by the General Assembly to promulgate standards and regulations which shall govern such reorganization.
7. The General Assembly has called for a referendum based upon plans for the merger of school districts projected by county boards of school directors and approved by the State Council of Education.

8. A Public School Building Authority has been created by the General Assembly to aid in the construction or improvement of school plant facilities needed to facilitate satisfactory reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas. Incidentally, this Authority will not be in position to function until reorganization plans have been completed at the local, county, and state levels.

These reasons are sufficient to indicate that the school authorities and the citizens of Pennsylvania should make a concerted effort to improve a type of school district organization which was inherited from pioneer days and which has long since become outmoded.

If education is to perform its function in the new world order which is emerging, the framework of educational purpose will have to be rebuilt to a considerable degree and our administrative machinery will need a major overhauling if it is to be geared to the job which lies ahead. Otherwise, equality of educational opportunity which, to date, is almost a myth will remain a hope deferred and a promise unfulfilled.

Needless to say, a tremendous responsibility rests upon county boards and their superintendents in directing the reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas. It is their joint obligation to determine what educational services and facilities are needed within the county and to propose an organization which will serve those needs most effectively and efficiently.

OBJECTIVES OF REORGANIZATION

1. To Provide a More Desirable Program of Education.

The major purpose of reorganization is the provision of better educational opportunities for the children, youth and adults of Pennsylvania who are entitled to education at public expense. While equality of educational opportunity may be unattainable, it can be more nearly approached if school units are properly organized and efficiently administered.

2. To Create More Efficient Units of Administration.

The primary function of a school district is to provide at least twelve years of instruction to every child living within its borders. Districts should be of sufficient size to provide the services and facilities necessary to offer a comprehensive program of elementary and secondary education. More than half of the school districts in Pennsylvania as presently organized are too small to perform this function. Therefore, one of the prime objectives of reorganization is to combine small school districts into larger and more efficient units of administration.

3. To Reorganize Attendance Areas on a More Efficient Basis.

Many schools are too small to provide the services expected of them and should be combined into more efficient units. After the administrative unit has been determined, attendance areas should be reorganized, if necessary and feasible, to include sufficient pupil population to justify all services and school plant facilities required to offer a satisfactory educational program.

4. To Provide Adequate Administrative and Supervisory Services.

Many school districts in Pennsylvania are too small to provide necessary administrative and supervisory services. The need for such services becomes increasingly apparent as our educational program expands to meet new demands. The growing complexity of administrative and supervisory responsibilities clearly indicates the necessity of reorganizing the administrative structure of our school system.

5. To Provide Suitable School Plant Facilities.

Many children in Pennsylvania are compelled to attend school in buildings which are obsolete with respect to modern standards of heating, lighting, ventilation and sanitation. The General Assembly has created a Public School Building Authority to assist school districts in the construction or improvement of needed school plant facilities. The law creating this Authority specifically states that all contracts between the Authority and school districts must be in accord with general plans for the development of improved administrative units and attendance areas. Here again the need for reorganization is clearly indicated.

6. To Provide Safe, Adequate and Economical Transportation Service.

Transportation of pupils is an essential service if we are to approach the goal of equality of educational opportunity. Because of the multiplicity of school districts as presently organized, many duplications of service exist which impair efficiency and increase costs. Herein lies another major reason for the reorganization of our administrative machinery.

ADVANTAGES OF REORGANIZATION

1. More equal educational opportunities for all Pennsylvania youth.
2. Better opportunities for high school education.
3. More equitable distribution of school costs.
4. More diversified educational services.
5. More efficient administration and supervision.
6. More efficient and economical transportation service.
7. Better trained personnel.
8. Less duplication of services and facilities.
9. Greater continuity of the educational program.
10. Improved library, health and guidance services.
11. Greater opportunities for vocational education.
12. Greater local control of the educational program.
13. Better articulation between the elementary and secondary schools.

14. Better utilization of school plant.

While not all of these advantages may accrue in any particular situation, most of them can be realized by the organization of larger units of administration and larger attendance areas.

THE DUTIES OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION

Act 361 provides that the State Council of Education shall review and approve or disapprove all plans for the merger of school districts or parts of school districts and for the reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas submitted by county boards of school directors in accordance with prescribed standards and regulations. Section 132 of the School Laws enjoins the State Council of Education to adopt and prescribe standards and regulations for the merger of school districts or parts thereof. Such standards and regulations shall take into consideration the following factors: topography, density of population, community interests, facility of transportation of pupils, financial ability of the district and existing school plants.

In compliance with these legal requirements, the State Council has adopted the following standards and regulations for the reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas:

I. ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

- A. An administrative unit is defined as the geographic area which is under one system of control. In general, it should embrace at least one secondary attendance area and one or more elementary attendance areas. In some cases, it may be advisable to organize administrative units to serve only the elementary school needs of the area and to depend upon adjacent administrative units for secondary school services and facilities. This is particularly true in cases where the secondary school needs of fourth class school districts are being served by school districts of the first, second or third class.
- B. Administrative units should have sufficient pupil population to justify at a reasonable per capita cost the following services:
 1. A comprehensive program of instruction from kindergarten through grade twelve including suitable instruction for physically and mentally handicapped children, instruction in the fine and practical arts, health and physical education.
 2. Adequate administrative and supervisory services which should include at least the following:
 - a. An administrator
 - b. A full-time clerk
 - c. Medical, dental and school nursing services
 - d. Home and school visitor service
 - e. Supervision of fine and practical arts, health and physical education
 - f. Library service
 - g. Guidance service
- C. In order to provide the services enumerated above, an administrative unit should embrace an area enrolling a minimum of 1,600 pupils. Only in very

exceptional cases should an administrative unit be organized which enrolls fewer than 800 pupils.

- D. Administrative units which are organized to serve elementary needs only should embrace an area enrolling a desirable minimum of 360 pupils or an absolute minimum of 180 pupils in grades one to six inclusive. Such units should provide a complete program of instruction in required subjects and as much administrative and supervisory service as the finances of the unit will permit.
- E. Existing school districts which do not meet the foregoing requirements should be reorganized into larger administrative units either by creating a union school district in accordance with the provisions of Section 127 of the School Laws or by forming joint boards for the establishment and maintenance of joint schools as provided for in Article XVIII of the School Laws. In either case, district or county boundary lines should not be deterrent factors. Administrative units may and often should cross county and district boundary lines. School districts of the fourth class may and, in many cases, should combine with school districts of the first, second or third class in creating larger units of administration.
- F. The administrative unit should be organized with respect to attendance areas so as to provide for minimum travel distances on roads that can be used throughout the year. It is undesirable to require children to spend more than two hours a day in traveling between home and school.

II. ATTENDANCE AREAS

- A. An attendance area is defined as the geographic area served by a single school.
- B. Attendance areas should be reorganized after the administrative unit has been determined; otherwise, overlapping and duplications are apt to result.
- C. The size of elementary and secondary attendance areas and the location of the schools will depend upon such factors as topography, community interests, natural barriers, transportation facilities, population trends, and existing building facilities.
- D. In general, permanent school centers should be located near the centers of population to keep transportation costs at a minimum.
- E. An elementary attendance area should include all pupils in grades one to six, inclusive, and, in so far as possible, should furnish a minimum enrollment of 180 pupils and employ at least six teachers. The pupils, however, should not be required to walk more than one and one-half or two miles to or from school, or ride on a school bus more than one hour each morning and evening, or be transported over roads that present extreme hazards.
- F. As soon as required school plant facilities can be provided, a secondary attendance area shall include all pupils in grades seven to twelve, inclusive.
- G. If feasible, secondary attendance areas should be organized to provide the following minimum enrollments:

1. Three hundred fifty pupils for a junior high school or a six-year junior-senior high school.
 2. Four hundred fifty pupils for a separately organized senior high school of grades ten, eleven and twelve.
- H. Each secondary attendance area should provide adequate school plant facilities in which to carry on the instruction and services of the school, including standard classrooms as needed; special rooms as needed for science, business education, home economics, industrial arts, agriculture, music, art, library, health and physical education, special education and assembly.
- I. A secondary attendance area should be established with due recognition of the facilities offered by cooperating second and third class school districts.
- J. No secondary attendance area should be established at the expense of an existing area which provides a satisfactory program.
- K. No new sub-standard secondary school shall be established where conditions are such as to make a standard unit possible.
- L. Whenever density of population permits or transportation is feasible, high school attendance areas large enough to make possible the development of considerably larger schools are desirable.
- M. The State Council of Education shall have the power to make regulations to except school districts or any part of them from any portion of this minimum program when in its opinion the sparse population, rugged terrain or other physical conditions make it impractical for the district to comply with the regulations.

DUTIES OF COUNTY BOARDS

Act 361 requires county boards of school directors to prepare and submit to the State Council of Education prior to the first Monday of July, 1948 county-wide plans for the merger of school districts or parts thereof and for the reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas.

Upon approval of the merger plans by the Council, the county board shall cause said plans to be submitted to a vote of the electorate. If the voters reject the plans, it becomes the duty of the county board to submit revised plans within a period of five years. Such revised plans may be submitted annually if deemed advisable.

In the performance of these duties, the county board and its superintendent should proceed as follows:

1. Determine the nature and scope of educational services and facilities needed to give every child, youth and adult adequate opportunities for maximum development.

2. Study the school district organization to discover existing deficiencies. This will entail an appraisal of the educational program, school plant facilities, transportation service, administrative and supervisory services and the financial structure in each school district in the county.
3. Confer with school authorities and lay groups in determining the educational needs of the county and the kind of administrative unit best suited to serve those needs. Such organizations as parent-teacher associations, service clubs, granges, farm bureaus, chambers of commerce and numerous other lay and professional groups should be invited to participate in the planning.
4. Enlist the cooperation of district superintendents and their boards in order to avoid duplication or omission of essential services and overlapping of administrative authority. It is of paramount importance that county superintendents, district superintendents, supervising principals and their respective boards collaborate in formulating plans for the administration of the county school system.
5. Obtain essential data upon which to base reorganization plans. These data should include such factors as topography, density of population, community interests, transportation facilities, population and enrollment trends, school census and attendance, holding power, industrial developments, occupational patterns, financial trends, unit costs of instruction, existing school plant facilities, educational programs and related factors.
6. Prepare a tentative plan of school district reorganization for the county indicating proposed district boundaries, temporary and permanent school centers and attendance areas, the proposed use or disposal of existing school plants and the approximate location of any new buildings that may be needed.
7. Hold public meetings to explain the objectives of the educational program, the proposed reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas, the reasons for the proposed changes, the advantages to be gained and the difficulties to be overcome.
8. Organize and conduct a publicity program which will provide the voters with essential facts upon which to make an intelligent decision at the polls when called upon to do so. Premature referendums without sufficient explanation as to causes and effects may retard desirable reorganization.
9. Revise the tentative plans, if necessary, on the basis of reactions obtained at public hearings and from influential lay groups. Any revision, however, should be supported by valid reasons.
10. Adopt final plans and submit them to the State Council of Education for review and recommendations prior to July 1, 1948. Suggested forms to be used in developing and reporting the plans are contained in the Appendix.
11. Prepare and present to the court of common pleas petitions requesting that merger plans approved by the State Council of Education be submitted to the electorate. This should be done at least ninety days before the election at which the question is presented to the voters.
12. File a certificate of the returns of the election with the State Council of Education.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
JANUARY 1954

TO THE HONORABLE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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GUIDEPOSTS TO BETTER SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The task of developing plans for the reorganization of the administrative structure of our public school system is by no means an easy one. The many conflicting interests involved will be brought into full play as plans are formulated to change the existing order. Obstacles in the nature of statutory limitations, political expediency, social prejudices, racial and religious differences, community pride, deep-rooted traditions, differentials in wealth, community jealousies and local inertia will be encountered. While these conflicting interests must be given due consideration, they should not be allowed to act as a restraining influence in shaping reorganization plans. The fundamental consideration which should guide county boards in the task assigned to them by the General Assembly should be the establishment of the best possible administrative organization for the schools of the county.

The following criteria are offered as guideposts for county boards and others as they consider various plans of school organization and the multiplicity of problems involved:

1. The plan recommended should provide for the best long-range educational program that can be devised. In some instances where the county coincides with the community as broadly conceived, a single county unit of administration may be recommended. In other cases, a modified county unit excluding school districts under the supervision of district superintendents may be desirable. Again, it may be more feasible under certain conditions to form union school districts or to establish joint schools.
2. Every administrative unit should, if possible, include grades one to twelve. The unit type of organization enables the district to offer a continuous, integrated educational program and eliminates many of the weaknesses inherent in our tuition system. It allows for greater efficiency and economy in the operation of schools and permits the offering of broader educational opportunities.
3. Every administrative unit should be large enough to provide essential administrative and supervisory services at a cost commensurate with other expenditures. Instructional efficiency depends in large measure upon administrative and supervisory efficiency. A modern educational program necessitates trained administrators and supervisors.
4. Administrative units should be formed with due regard for population characteristics. Consideration should be given to such vital statistics as population trends, birth rates, trends in occupational patterns and trends in school enrollments. Recent increases in the birth rates in many localities forecast a rapid acceleration of school enrollments.
5. Local initiative should be encouraged and local autonomy should be preserved to the greatest possible extent consistent with economy and efficiency. It is of paramount importance that final control in the matter of school district reorganization should rest with the people. To this end the General Assembly has called for a referendum whereby the people may vote upon the plan of reorganization proposed by the school authorities.
6. School districts should be reorganized on the basis of function. A major problem confronting county boards as they proceed to formulate reorganization plans will be to determine the purpose of the school districts which they

propose to form. Administrative units should be large enough to make available to all residents educational opportunities commensurate with their varying needs, interests, aptitudes and capacities. This means a complete educational program through at least the twelfth grade and, in the light of recent trends, it appears that plans must be projected to include two additional years of educational service.

7. The administrative unit should be large enough to enjoy a considerable degree of fiscal independence. If school districts are to be capable of sustaining at least a defensible minimum program of education, it is essential to incorporate concentrations of local wealth in the same unit with concentrations of children.
8. Administrative units should be large enough to permit flexibility in the maintenance of satisfactory attendance areas. The unit should be large enough to absorb the shock of population shifts within the area due to the decline in rural population, the growth of suburban areas or other causes without disrupting the educational program.
9. Administrative units should be large enough to have a stable, continuous, long-range policy. The maintenance of such a policy entails a district large enough to employ and retain a competent administrative staff. Studies have shown that there is a direct relationship between the size of the administrative unit and the turnover of well-trained administrators and supervisors. The turnover is excessive in school systems employing less than forty teachers. Also, a stable school board is essential for continuity of educational policies. Large districts tend toward such stability.
10. Administrative units should be so planned that satisfactory elementary and secondary schools can be located at convenient centers without unduly long transportation routes. The future development of many attendance areas will be governed by natural barriers and other topographical conditions. herefore, administrative units should be large enough to permit economical bus scheduling.
11. Administrative units may and often should cross county lines. However, it is imperative that in such cases the county boards involved cooperate in reaching their conclusions. Joint sessions should be held in order to avoid the pernicious practice of different boards giving conflicting recommendations for the same territory. Careful deliberation rather than a race for territory should characterize the consideration of reorganization plans which involve county boundaries.
12. Administrative units should make possible the most economical formation of desirable attendance areas. The size and location of such attendance areas will end upon topography, road conditions, density of population, isolation of the areas to be served, educational objectives of the school and the utilization of existing buildings to the best advantage. In some localities it may be necessary to maintain one-teacher schools for grades one through six until transportation to larger centers becomes feasible.
13. Attendance areas should be planned with a view of having all children ultimately enrolled in an elementary school of at least 180 pupils or a high school with a minimum enrollment of 350. While these standards are unattainable under present conditions, future plans should be drawn along those lines.

14. Attendance areas should be planned with a view of maximum utilization of school plant facilities for recreational purposes, adult education and community enterprises of an educational nature. It is poor economy to use public buildings only a few hours each day and to have them idle several months during the summer. The school has an obligation to the general social life of the area it serves and school buildings should be used as centers for a wide variety of general community affairs.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

STEP I

Determine educational objectives. We must first come to an agreement as to the services we want our schools to offer and then plan administrative units that will give us what we need. It is the function of public education in Pennsylvania to provide to all children, youth and adults the educational opportunities to prepare them for active participation in a democratic society. To this end the schools should be organized and administered to:

1. Meet the needs of all pupils and adapt the program to their individual interests and abilities.
2. Provide essential health services including health and physical education, physical examinations, remedial measures and preventive health services.
3. Make special provision for mentally and physically handicapped and for gifted children.
4. Provide a well-balanced program in the fine and practical arts as well as in the academic subjects.
5. Give to each pupil, in so far as his abilities permit, a mastery of the fundamental skills as a foundation for successful learning and living.
6. Give guidance in meeting educational, vocational, leisure and social problems.
7. Teach children to understand, appreciate and practice the principles of democracy.
8. Develop in children the ability of self-direction, self-control, self-appraisal and an appreciation of knowledge for its own worth.
9. Develop a moral and ethical sense in pupils so they will manifest personal integrity, open-mindedness, courtesy, tolerance, a sense of responsibility, respect for constituted authority and appreciation for the rights of others.
10. Help children to learn how to work with others cooperatively and effectively in an interdependent society and develop competent leadership.
11. Help children to find their most productive role in life and to develop good work habits; to give those who do not go to college fundamental science and vocational training looking toward qualification for work at the highest level of their skills.
12. Encourage wholesome and creative forms of recreation and play for all children.

13. Provide well-trained teachers, supervisors, administrators and specialists such as nurses, physicians, dentists, dental hygienists, psychologists, librarians, guidance counselors, home and school visitors and dietitians who are interested in the development of community life.
14. Provide safe, sanitary and suitably equipped school buildings adapted to the educational program to be offered.
15. Make available transportation facilities for all public school pupils living beyond a reasonable walking distance from the school to which they are assigned.
16. Provide a complete system of records for pupils that furnishes cumulative information concerning health history, school achievement, school attendance, test records, participation in school activities and personal adjustment.
17. Have a sufficiently large enrollment to permit good gradation and to insure a reasonable teacher-pupil ratio.
18. Provide opportunities and facilities for adult education in accordance with the needs and demands.
19. Make maximum use of community resources--social, economic and cultural.
20. Make the school an essential part of community life serving all the people in the administrative unit according to their needs.

STEP II

Determine what data are essential in planning a reorganization of administrative units and attendance areas and how those data can be obtained. A major responsibility of county boards and their superintendents will be that of securing the data for study which will serve as a basis for their recommendations. The following outline suggests the type of information which will be needed in appraising the present organization and suggesting desirable changes.

1. General Population Trends.

Important elements in planning for the future developments of public schools are those of population trends and composition. Reasons for shifts in population are highly important and should receive careful consideration. The trends as reported by the United States Census and annually by the State Planning Board of the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce should be tabulated and carefully analyzed as to cause and effect.

2. School Enrollment Trends.

Present enrollments should be studied in terms of past experiences and future probabilities. These studies will entail tabulation and analysis of data showing detailed enrollments in the elementary and secondary schools including kindergartens by grades over a period of years. They should focus attention upon probable peak enrollment, estimate of future high school enrollment, holding power, children of school age not in school, retardation, overageness and other relevant considerations.

3. School Census Trends.

Data should be collected, organized and analyzed regarding all persons from birth to at least eighteen years of age. The unprecedented birth rate currently reported foretells a major crisis confronting many school districts as they seek to provide adequate facilities for the crowds of children that are on their way to the public schools in the near future.

4. Educational Opportunities Offered by the Present Organization.

Studies should be made of the existing courses of study available, the extent to which they meet current demands and obvious deficiencies which might be remedied by more effective organization.

5. Financial Trends.

Data should be collected and tabulated to show trends in assessed valuations, tax rates, tax collections, tax delinquencies, indebtedness, state appropriation, receipts according to source, expenditures by major items, instructional costs, transportation costs, tuition costs and such other items as may have local significance.

6. Tuition Data.

A study should be made of the non-resident high school enrollment by grades and distributed according to the receiving and sending districts.

7. Occupational Trends.

In order to provide proper educational offerings, an analysis should be made by sex of the occupational distribution of the area as revealed by the United States Census. This will predicate in part the occupational pattern which will be followed by a large segment of the pupils.

8. Existing School Plant Facilities

Data should be assembled to show the extent to which present buildings are inadequate to meet current or future demands contemplated by the proposed educational program. Investment costs per resident pupil and per tuition pupil will serve to emphasize the need for reorganization.

9. Transportation Service.

A careful study should be made of school bus routes as presently organized to disclose unnecessary duplications which might be eliminated through reorganization.

10. Personnel Data.

A study of personnel with respect to training, experience, salary, tenure and responsibilities will, in many cases, tend to support the need for reorganization.

STEP III

Analyze and organize data to show existing deficiencies with particular emphasis upon:

1. Inadequate educational services under the present organization.
2. Obsolete school plant facilities.
3. Excessively high unit costs of instruction, administration, transportation and supervision of specialized services.
4. Inadequate health services.
5. Lack of cafeteria or school lunch facilities.
6. Inadequate library services.
7. Poor holding power of the schools as presently organized.
8. Lack of recreational facilities.
9. Poor utilization of existing school plant facilities.
10. Poor articulation between elementary and secondary units.
11. Duplications in transportation services.
12. Low average daily attendance.
13. Low local income
14. Low assessed valuations.

STEP IV

Study possible plans of reorganization to determine the best type of administrative unit to meet the needs of the particular county. After the county board has determined the educational needs of the county and collected data to show what deficiencies exist under the present organization, the next step will be to recommend a reorganization of the school districts in such a manner as to overcome existing deficiencies and place the county school system on a sound educational and financial basis. No hard and fast rule can be applied in the drafting of reorganization plans because of variations in local needs. A desirable type of organization under one set of circumstances may not be suitable under a different set of circumstances. Therefore, the General Assembly has given county school authorities discretionary powers to plan the kind of school organization they deem advisable.

In general, reorganization plans should seek to:

1. Establish administrative units with sufficient school population to provide an adequate educational program and related essential services from kindergarten through grade twelve at a reasonable unit cost.
2. Unite districts, either by forming union districts or joint boards, which find it impossible to offer satisfactory school programs.
3. Combine small elementary schools, if feasible, into units enrolling at least 180 pupils in the first six grades.

4. Close small high schools, if feasible, and combine them into high school units enrolling at least 350 pupils in grades seven through twelve.
5. Organize attendance areas on the basis of a six-year elementary school and a six-year high school.
6. Provide suitable school sites, school plant facilities and equipment to accommodate the proposed educational program.
7. Establish area vocational schools as needed. Such schools may serve more than one administrative unit.
8. Preserve desirable attendance areas and permanent school centers and reorganize those attendance areas which are undesirable.
9. Provide safe, efficient and economical transportation service for elementary pupils living more than one and one-half miles from school and for high school pupils living two miles or more from school.

STEP V

Prepare plans to submit to the State Council of Education showing:

1. Proposed administrative units.
2. Proposed elementary centers and attendance areas.
3. Proposed secondary centers and attendance areas.
4. Nature and extent of building needs.
5. Fiscal status of the proposed administrative units.

STEP VI

Prepare and present petitions to the Court of Common Pleas requesting that the question of reorganization be presented to the electorate.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This is a series of questions and answers pertaining to the merger of school districts, the reorganization of administrative units and the reorganization of attendance areas. The questions are those most frequently asked and it is hoped that the answers will aid in promoting a better general understanding of the problems involved in school district reorganization by the citizens of Pennsylvania when they are called upon to vote on reorganization plans.

1. Why is reorganization necessary?

Pennsylvania has more than 2500 school districts many of which are too small to meet the constantly increasing demands for more and better educational services and facilities efficiently and economically. School districts which were designed to serve the needs of a pioneer age are finding it increasingly difficult to provide essential services and school plant facilities at a reasonable unit cost. Likewise, many schools which were established for teaching only the bare essentials are too small to offer the broader curriculums now required. A larger administrative unit embracing larger attendance units is needed in many parts of Pennsylvania if the school system is to even approach the goal of equality of educational opportunity.

2. Why is reorganization of school units being urged at this particular time?

The need for reorganization has long been recognized. Pressure for immediate action stems from such causes as: expanding functions of school districts; a change in the method of State support; rapidly mounting costs of education; increased difficulty of finding and retaining well-trained personnel in the smaller districts; inability of districts as presently organized to provide adequate school plant facilities; an ever-increasing amount of administrative details which small districts are not equipped to handle expeditiously and an unprecedented increase in the birth rate which will put further strain upon many small districts already overburdened.

3. What can the people do to improve school district reorganization?

The 1947 session of the General Assembly passed Act 361 which provides a thoroughly democratic method of reorganizing school districts where conditions warrant it provided the voters in the affected areas approve reorganization plans.

4. Is reorganization mandatory under the provisions of Act 361?

No. The Act simply requires county boards of school directors to draft plans for the merger of school districts and for the reorganization of attendance areas and administrative units and, if approved by the State Council of Education, submit the plans to a vote of the people.

5. What happens if the voters reject the proposed plans?

The Act provides that, if the voters do not approve the proposed plans, revised plans shall be submitted within five years. A referendum may be held annually, if deemed advisable, but must be conducted at least every five years until some plan of reorganization has been approved by the electorate.

6. What is an administrative unit?

An administrative unit as defined in the standards adopted by the State Council of Education is a geographic area which is under one system of control. It is under the direction of one governing body which may be one school board or a joint board composed of the boards in several school districts operating a system of schools jointly. It should embrace at least one secondary school attendance area and one or more elementary school attendance areas.

7. What constitutes a desirable administrative unit?

An administrative unit should provide adequate educational services and facilities from the kindergarten through at least the twelfth grade. It should make possible a continuous, unified educational program from the time the pupil enters school until he leaves. It should provide essential administrative and supervisory services.

8. How large should an administrative unit be?

According to standards prescribed by the State Council of Education and endorsed by an Advisory Committee representing county and district superintendents, an administrative unit should, if feasible, enroll 1600 pupils in grades one to twelve inclusive. No administrative unit should be planned with fewer than 800 pupils except in areas of extremely sparse population or rugged terrain. Districts which are too small to meet these standards should be combined with other districts.

9. What are the advantages of larger units of administration?

Research indicates that an administrative unit enrolling 1600 or more pupils can provide: a more comprehensive educational program; a better coordinated program; more efficient and economical management; greater equality of educational opportunity; more equitable distribution of costs; better trained personnel; longer tenure of qualified administrators, supervisors, teachers and board members; less duplication of services and facilities and greater continuity of the educational program.

10. What is meant by an attendance area?

An attendance area is the geographical and population area served by a single school. It may be organized to serve elementary, secondary or vocational school needs or any combination thereof. It may be only one of several attendance areas within an administrative unit.

11. What constitutes a desirable attendance area?

Wherever possible, an elementary attendance area should be organized to include a minimum of 180 pupils in grades one through six. Schools of this size show lower unit costs and more comprehensive educational programs than are found in smaller schools.

A secondary attendance area should, if possible, include 350 or more pupils in grades seven through twelve. Studies have shown that unit costs decrease and educational opportunities increase until an enrollment of 500 has been attained. The records indicate that, in schools enrolling fewer than 350 pupils, either the educational program is restricted or the unit costs mount unduly as attempts are made to meet the needs of special groups of students.

12. How far should pupils be expected to walk to or from school?

It is desirable to provide transportation for all elementary pupils living more than one and one-half miles from school and for all high school pupils residing two miles or more from school.

13. How far should pupils be transported?

The length of a bus route should be measured in terms of time rather than distance. A bus ride of not more than one hour each way is usually considered reasonable. If possible, bus routes should be organized so that the younger children can reach school within half or three-quarters of an hour from the time they leave home. With modern transportation facilities, good roads and fairly direct bus routes, a pupil can reside at a considerable distance from the school he attends.

14. Does the formation of larger administrative units mean the consolidation of schools within the unit?

No. Many schools may remain in operation to serve attendance areas as presently organized. In some cases, it may be advantageous to combine small schools or reassign pupils to different schools but it is expected that the governing body of the larger administrative unit will continue to operate existing schools except those which are educationally or economically unsound.

15. Who determines the location of school centers and attendance areas?

The governing body in each administrative unit will determine where schools shall be located and what area they shall serve. Large districts provide greater flexibility in the organization of attendance areas by permitting the shifting of enrollments and personnel to meet changing conditions. A city school system embracing several schools, all administered by one school board, illustrates the relationship between an administrative unit and its component attendance areas.

16. Does reorganization mean increased state control of education?

No. On the contrary experience has shown that large school districts have more effective local control than is found in small districts. None of the powers of local school boards are lost through reorganization. Reorganized districts would be under local control the same as local school districts now are.

17. Will larger school units make possible a better educational program?

Yes. Larger schools make it possible to obtain the services of personnel having specialized training. They can provide facilities and equipment for many activities that cannot be provided in small schools except at prohibitive unit costs. Fine arts, practical arts, vocational education, visual education, guidance services, library services and cafeteria services are among the essential services which can be provided more economically in a larger unit.

18. Will reorganization tend to improve high school opportunities?

Yes. Many high schools are becoming overcrowded because of non-resident pupils. Districts maintaining these high schools cannot be expected to tax themselves to provide additional school plant facilities for pupils from outside their districts. Reorganization would help to remedy this situation by spreading the cost of needed buildings over the area deriving benefits from the school. Furthermore, it would tend to eliminate many of the weaknesses inherent in our tuition system and make local control a reality instead of a myth.

19. Will reorganization of school districts promote greater economy?

Yes. There will be fewer buildings to maintain, fewer teachers to employ, less duplication of facilities and services, reduced overhead cost and greater instructional efficiency. While there will probably be no actual savings over present costs, it is reasonable to expect greater return for the money expended. It would be misleading to advocate a reduction of school expenses during a period of inflation and expanding school services. It is a foregone conclusion that more money will be spent for schools in the future but such increases will be due to factors other than reorganization.

20. Will school costs be distributed more equitably by reorganization?

Yes. The enlarged administrative unit will have greater assessed valuation; it will be better able to provide all the services and facilities needed and spread the cost more evenly over a larger area.

21. Will reorganization tend to improve administration and supervision?

Yes. By decreasing the number of districts and schools, the county superintendent and his staff can devote more time to each unit. Moreover, the number of administrative and supervisory officials will be increased as units large enough to justify their employment are created.

22. How can larger units of school administration be formed?

Larger administrative units may be formed either by the formation of a union school district in accordance with the provisions of Section 127 of the School Laws or by the creation of a joint board to operate a joint school system in accordance with Article XVIII of the School Laws.

23. What is a union school district?

It is an administrative unit formed by uniting any two or more school districts as presently organized. Its formation requires the assent of the electors in each of the school districts affected. Districts electing to form a union school district are abolished and become a part of the newly created union district. All assets and liabilities of the several districts are absorbed by the union district unless otherwise determined before the referendum. The union school district operates under the direction of one school board and has a uniform tax rate.

24. What is a joint board?

It is a governing body composed of the school boards in any two or more school districts electing to establish and maintain joint schools. It is a device permitting school districts to form larger units of administration without abolishing school districts as presently organized. Joint boards may be formed and joint schools may be established without the assent of the electorate. Each school district retains its identity, elects its school board, levies and collects its taxes and enjoys fiscal independence. Each district is assured of local control by virtue of its veto power.

25. Are rural people interested in reorganization?

Yes. There is a decided movement developing in the rural areas of Pennsylvania for better educational services. More union districts and joint boards have been formed in the past two years than in any corresponding period in our educational history. Three very distinct trends can be observed; namely, (1) small schools are closing more rapidly than ever before, (2) schools are being reorganized from the eight-four to the six-six plan at an accelerated rate and (3) larger units of administration are being formed apace.

26. Is there a national trend toward larger administrative units?

Yes. The number of school districts in the United States is constantly decreasing. In the past twenty years the number has been reduced from approximately 189,000 to fewer than 112,00. Practically every state legislature has considered proposals for school district reorganization in recent years and several states are now in the process of putting reorganization plans into effect.

27. Whose responsibility is it to provide housing for non-resident pupils?

It is the responsibility of all districts in which the pupils reside. Many districts now accepting non-resident pupils do not have sufficient assessed valuation to permit them to provide needed school plant facilities. It is essential, therefore, that several districts unite to provide a larger tax base.

